

New group claims Lebanon killing

BEIRUT (AP) — A previously unknown group claimed responsibility Monday for last week's assassination in Beirut of a Sunni Muslim fundamentalist leader. It was the second claim for last Thursday's killing of Sheikh Nizar Al Halabi, gunned down by masked assassins outside his home. His son, driver and a bodyguard were wounded. Two Lebanese have been detained in connection with the killing, which has cast doubt on efforts to restore stability following the end in 1990 of Lebanon's 15-year civil war. Al Halabi, 43, headed the Islamic Charitable Projects Association, an organization bankrolling the fundamentalist Al-Babash group, whose members are estimated to number about 5,000. His deputy, Sheikh Mohammad Qaraqira, was chosen as successor on the same day. A caller, speaking in Lebanese-accented Arabic, telephoned the Beirut office of a Western news agency Monday to say his "Umma Party" group was responsible for Halabi's killing. "We carried out the execution... because of the association's Jewish origin and conduct," said the caller.

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Clock ticks down to deadline for Serbs

SARAJEVO (R) — North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) warplanes circled over Bosnia as the hours counted down to the Monday night deadline for Serb forces to ease their siege of Sarajevo or face renewed bombardment.

Bosnian Serb big guns around the capital were silent as dusk fell ahead of the 11 p.m. (2100 GMT) time. The United Nations and NATO had set for Serb commander General Ratko Mladic to comply with their demands.

"If he doesn't play ball he's going to get hit very, very hard," that is the bottom line, said U.N. spokesman Alexander Ivankov, reflecting the new tough-talking mood since NATO's three days of air raids last week.

But there was no sign of the guns being pulled back, the U.N. said, or any word from the Bosnian Serbs they would meet the demands. To remind the Bosnian Serbs of the threat two NATO jets roared over the "capital" Pale through low cloud.

Exactly a week after a devastating mortar attack on a Sarajevo market killed 38 people and injured 85, provoking NATO to act after long hesitation, the people of Sarajevo relished the new sense of protection.

"I'm not afraid at all," said cigarette-seller Zijada Aliehajic who was back at her stand where the mortar hit. "It's the Serb cowards who are shaking in their boots now... the world seems serious about stopping the war this time."

The United Nations has not waited for the deadline to pass to test Serb compliance. Convoys of trucks crossed in

and out of the city on a road opened by the U.N. in defiance of the Serbs.

U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke played down the concerns of the Bosnian government that a pause since Friday morning in NATO attacks had gone on too long.

"It took us many years to get to this point and I don't think a few hours either way is going to make a difference," he said.

In Brussels, NATO officials tried to take the heat out of expectations that air strikes might resume exactly at 11 p.m. said one senior NATO source: "The situation will then be fully assessed, it is not a deadline for the start of bombing."

With the threat of further bombardment hovering, the Serbs protested that their counter proposals to the U.N. had been misinterpreted. But a text of their position was stitched with conditions the U.N. had already said it would not countenance.

Mr. Holbrooke and European Union mediators kept up a hectic pace of diplomatic contacts ahead of Friday's proposed face-to-face meeting of Bosnian, Croatian and Yugoslav foreign ministers in Geneva.

Mr. Holbrooke said again that the delay in air raids put its participation in Geneva in doubt.

Serb military sources claimed they were holding two French aviators whose Mirage fighter-bomber was shot down during raids last Thursday. The news raised fears the Bosnian Serbs could use them as hostages to ward off fresh air strikes.

U.N. officials in Sarajevo said the fact that Bosnian

army guns were silent suggested some compliance with the demands laid down by NATO. They stressed, however, that the Serbs had much further to go.

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who visited Bosnia last December in a modest private attempt to get to grips with the conflict, said Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic called him on Monday to say his forces would comply with the U.N.

But with divisions between the Bosnian Serb political and army leadership it was not clear how much Mr. Karadzic can deliver.

The only formal reply to U.N. demands on record was made by Gen. Mladic on Saturday after marathon talks with U.N. force commander General Bernard Janvier.

In his response, a copy of which was faxed to Reuters on Monday, Gen. Mladic gave no guarantee to open Sarajevo airport or to unconditionally withdraw heavy weapons from Sarajevo.

Instead he demands an immediate ceasefire throughout Bosnia — a concession the Bosnian government has always resisted because it would freeze current frontlines to Serb advantage.

Mr. Holbrooke's negotiations now focus on how to split Bosnia between a Muslim and Croat federation and the Serbs roughly along the lines of last year's peace plan map.

While both sides have apparently agreed to a 51-49 per cent split they are far apart over who gets what. The Bosnian Serbs currently control roughly 70 per cent.



King, Queen on private visit to U.K.

AMMAN (Petra) — Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor left Amman on Monday for London on a several-day private visit to the United Kingdom.

Also present to bid farewell to the King and Queen were Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem, the speakers of parliament, cabinet members and senior officials as well as the British ambassador to Jordan.

Crown Prince Hassan was sworn in to serve as Regent during the King's absence.

Accompanying the King and Queen on their visit are several princes and princesses and Jordan's ambassador to the United Kingdom.

Israeli, PLO delegates start looking at maps

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) negotiating teams on Monday began studying maps to work out intricate security arrangements for expanding Palestinian rule in the West Bank, a PLO official said.

"Both sides will today over such key issues as redeployment from Hebron where some 400 Jewish settlers live among 100,000 Palestinians.

Israel wants to delay redeployment from Hebron while Palestinians insist on a two-stage pullout from the city with temporary security arrangements in the Old City where Jews live.

The talks, in Israel's Red Sea resort of Eilat, resumed on Sunday night. The sides are more than a year behind schedule on expanding 16-month-old self-rule beyond Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho.

"We are talking about borders and security arrangements which require detailed maps," Mr. Qourie said in a reference to an Israeli troop redeployment away from West Bank Palestinian cities as envisaged in their 1993 breakthrough peace deal.

According to that agreement, Israel is to redeploy away from populated Palestinian areas, which include major cities and villages, but not from Jewish settlements and military sites.

Officials say the West Bank could end up looking like a complex mosaic as the two sides define boundaries around each town and village, settlement and main road where three different kinds of security arrangements are to apply.

The students, supported by parents and teachers, shouted slogans such as "Rabin's peace is false" and "Throw out the settlers."

"Let us learn in peace," read one placard in Arabic, Hebrew and English.

Israeli security forces did not intervene.

Women conference begins with emphasis on equality

BEIJING (Agencies) — The biggest U.N. gathering in history began on Monday in China's Great Hall of the People with an extravaganza that included female martial-arts experts and a U.N. declaration that sexual equality was the last great project of the 20th century.

United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Ghali said in a speech read at the start of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

The conference, held every 10 years, kicked off earlier with a lavish welcoming ceremony at the Great Hall of the People where a workers' choir sang Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" and Chinese President Jiang Zemin quoted the Chinese saying that "women hold up half the sky."

But Mr. Jiang said discrimination against women was as old as history.

"Prejudices against women, like an invisible chain, fetter the hearts and minds of millions, such outworn mentality should have long been discarded," he said.

Thirty thousand women have flooded into Beijing for

the conference and a parallel non-governmental organisations (NGO) forum on women in the suburb of Mauirou.

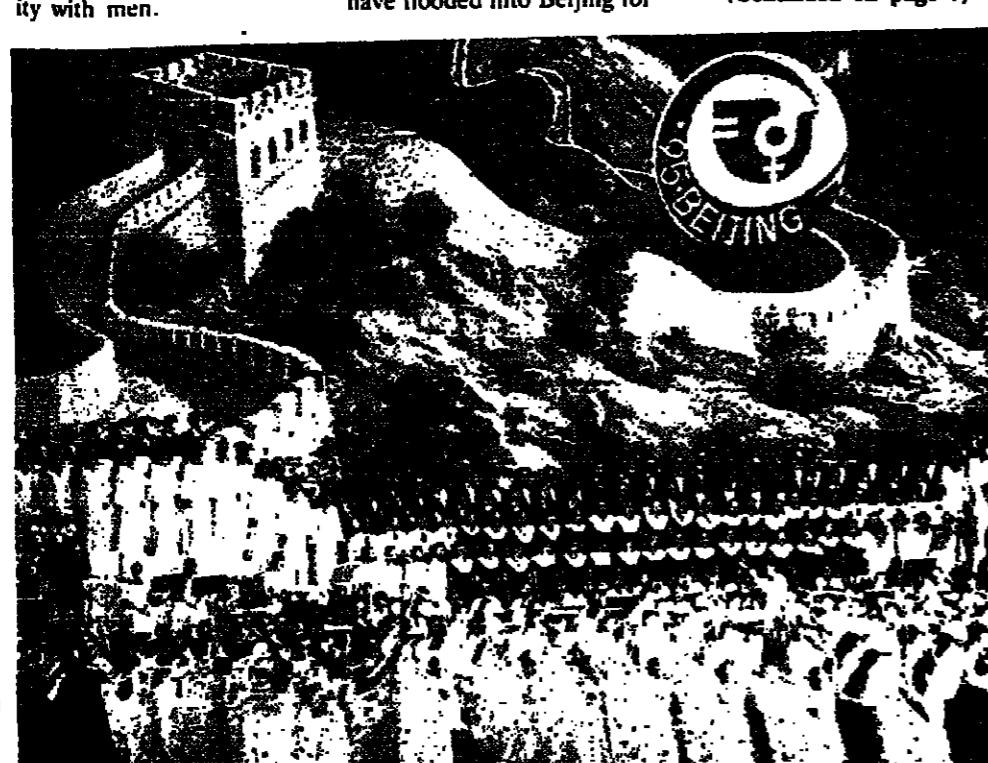
Heads of 185 government delegations were among the audience in the Stalinist-style hall on the edge of Tiananmen Square who raised a roar of approval when female experts fought off male attackers with vicious kicks and punches in a martial-arts display.

"A revolution has begun," conference Secretary-General Gertrude Mongella declared to huge cheers from the delegates. "There's no going back. There's no going back."

"This conference is a milestone in the history of the United Nations' work for women," Dr. Ghali said in a speech delivered in his absence.

"Future generations will

(Continued on page 7)



Dancers and singers perform during the Chinese government's official welcoming ceremony for the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing (AFP photo)

Iraqi exiles want peaceful change at top

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Iraqi opponents including three former ministers called on politicians and army chiefs to take advantage of internal upheaval in Baghdad to bring about a peaceful change in government.

The Iraqi Consultative Committee said in a statement that leading Iraqi and Arab figures met in Vienna at the weekend to discuss developments in Baghdad following the Aug. 8 defection to Jordan of two top officials.

The group's statement was signed by former Foreign Minister Adnan Badgadi, former Industry Minister Adib Al Jader and Abdul Ghani Al Dali, ex-agriculture minister.

The former director general of the Iraqi Oil Ministry, Fadel Al Jalabi, also signed. They described as a "great

turning point" the defections of General Hussein Kamel, ex-industry minister, his brother and their wives, both daughters of President Saddam Hussein.

"They reveal for the first time the contradictions at the heart of the regime as a prelude to its collapse," the opposition group said.

"For members of the (ruling) Baath Party and the armed forces they represent a chance to take part in a national effort to bring about peaceful change which would save the country from bloodshed and foreign interference."

The statement called for a democratic, multi-party system in Iraq and a government which put an end to political oppression and respected its international commitments and the rights of Kurds.

It also urged measures to boost Iraq's economy, which has been crippled by five years of U.N. sanctions, and to improve relations with its neighbours "in order to free Iraq from the fall-out of the (1980-1988) war with Iran and the invasion of Kuwait" in 1990.

Gen. Kamel Hassan meant while denied that he planned to put his views to a meeting of opposition groups in London.

Gen. Kamel is "not involved" in the meeting on Saturday and "will not present his political programme there," said his cousin Izzedin Mohammad Hassan, who defected with him.

Iraqi meanwhile called on Iran to join it in a fight against the "common enemy" — the West.

The economic and political weight of Iran and Iraq qualify them to take the role of

the two powers that attract the "straying horses" in the jungle of the American wolf," Iraq's state-run Al Jumhuriya newspaper said in an editorial.

"The existence of a common enemy... which is the West, provides us with two options... the tactics cooperation option if strategic cooperation is impossible."

"The second option is based on agreeing on common essential points, foremost of which is confronting attempts to annihilate the Muslims and protecting their interests, values and principles."

The editorial, marking the 15th anniversary of the start of the 1980-88 Iraq-Iran war, was carried by the official Iraqi News Agency.

(Continued on page 7)

Israel sends envoy to Cairo to calm war crime dispute

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel dispatched Deputy Foreign Minister Elie Dayan to Cairo on Monday to try to bolster relations amid a storm over the killing of Egyptian prisoners of war (PoWs).

"We hope that prisoner of war issue will not damage relations," said Mr. Dayan, who was to meet Foreign Minister Amr Musa later in the day.

"If there was criminal behaviour it was by individuals and not deliberate policy," Mr. Dayan told state radio. "And anyway terrible things were done by both sides."

He pointed out that under Israeli law soldiers guilty of war crimes cannot be prosecuted more than 20 years after the events.

Mr. Dayan renewed an appeal in the Egyptian government "to condemn and to deny" an article in a Cairo newspaper which accused Israel's Ambassador David Sultan of killing around 100 Arab prisoners of war.

The radio said Foreign Minister Shimon Peres had instructed his deputy to "go on the offensive" by pointing out that Egyptian soldiers had also committed atrocities.

Reports first emerged in Israel last month of the massacre of up to 900 Egyptian prisoners who had surrendered their arms in the 1976 Suez campaign and 1967 Middle East war.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak called on Israel to prosecute those responsible.

Israeli historian Aryeh Yitzhaki, who first revealed the massacres, also urged Mr. Mubarak to investigate the execution of more than 80 Israeli prisoners in Egyptian camps during the 1973 Middle East war.

"The intention is to tell the Egyptians that in the past both sides did things which should not have been done, but these were acts of individuals, not the policy of the governments, and that we must learn from the mistakes of the past, and not let them harm relations in the present," said Dayan aide Yitzhak Avigad.

Islamist leader to stand for Algerian presidency

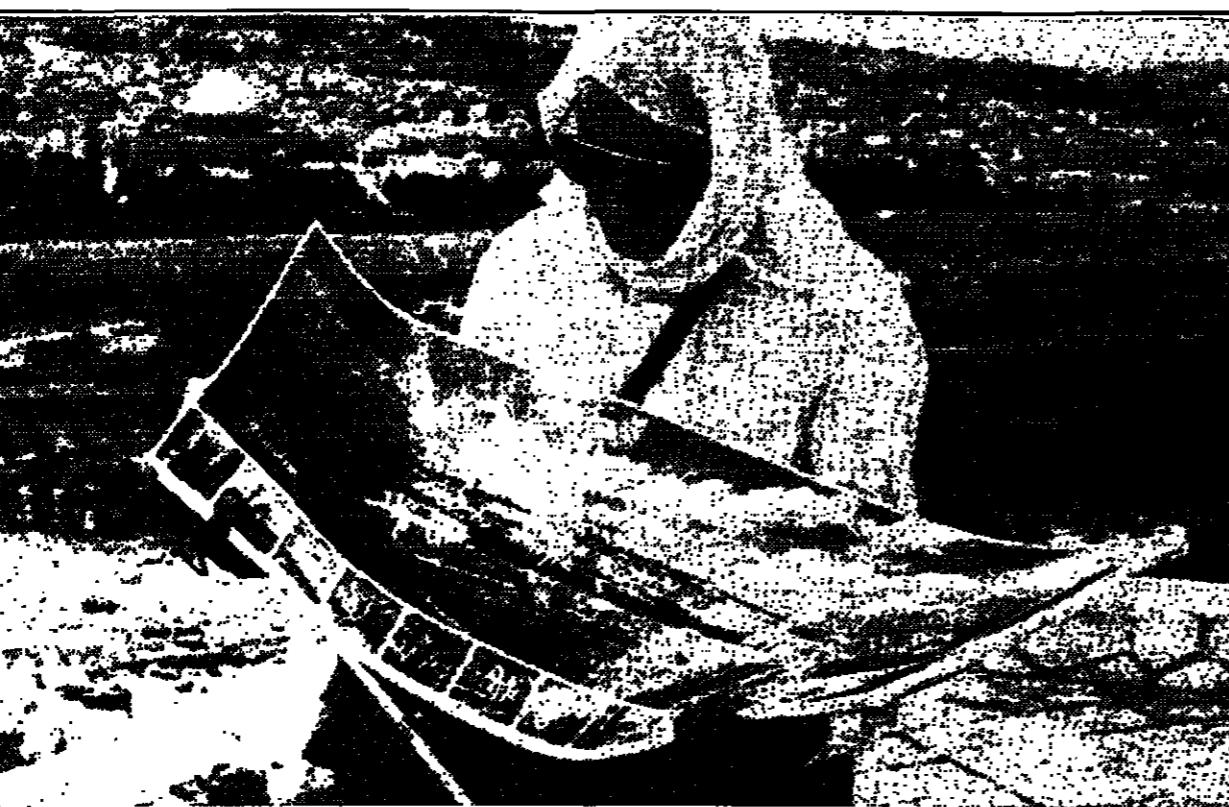
PARIS (R) — A moderate Islamist leader and arch-enemy of hardline Muslim fundamentalists has said he would stand in Algeria's presidential poll on Nov. 16.

Mohammed Nahmeh, who is opposed both by militants waging war against the army-backed authorities and by the main secular political parties, told a press conference in Algiers that his Islamic society movement has endorsed his candidacy.

But he is seen as one of the few politicians who can stride over the first poll hurdle of gaining 75,000 supporters' signatures in order to qualify as a candidate.

His party, known by its Arabic acronym Hamas, is believed to have more than 250,000 supporters.

At least 12 other politicians, including former Prime



HOLY CITY: A blind Palestinian holds up for sale a panorama photograph of Jerusalem with the real view of the Holy City and the Golden Dome of the Rock behind him. On Monday, Israel launched what it considers as the 3,000th anniversary of Jerusalem (see page 12) (AFP photo)

Films against militants prove box office smash

CAIRO (AFP) — Films and TV soaps critical of militants are proving a smash hit in Egypt both at the box office and with television audiences.

"If the overriding theme of cinema in the 1970s was political corruption, which turned to the emergence of new social classes in the 1980s, now its focus is terrorism by Islamists," director Wahid Hamed told AFP.

"Belly-dancers, formerly the centre of Egyptian films, have given way to veiled women, while the seductive hero has been dethroned by bearded 'emirs' (militant leaders) and Islamist lawyers," Mr. Hamed said.

Love scenes have been replaced by action shots such as fires in video stores, hold-ups in jewelers' shops or attacks on policemen and writers.

Mr. Hamed wrote the screenplay for "Birds of Darkness" which has swept the country since it opened two weeks ago and is showing on 20 screens.

It stars Egypt's most

popular comedian Adel Imam, who began the wave of anti-Islamist films with his 1993 "Terrorism and Barbecue" and "The Terrorist" a year later.

Such films are "a very strong weapon against terrorism. In a country where half the population is illiterate, films and television are better at informing the public than news bulletins and articles," Mr. Hamed said.

The authorities, who keep a tight grip on the Egyptian media, have welcomed the trend and given it scope to act freely.

Censors allowed "Birds of Darkness" to tell the story of a corrupt minister who wins a parliament election by striking a deal with Islamic activists.

The government also gave Mr. Imam unprecedented access to police and army equipment during his last three films, to such an extent that some critics accuse him of "selling out" to government propaganda.

Officials have also opened the door to a flur-

ry of anti-Islamist soap operas and series. "The Family," written by Mr. Hamed, was the first and has proved the most successful along with the latest, "Escaping the Crisis."

"Egyptian television will continue to produce works which condemn the practices of the extremists which are wrong and contrary to the spirit of tolerance in Islam," Information Minister Safwat Al Ousheiri said.

"These works have encouraged the population to help security services in their fight against fundamentalists," he said.

The confrontation between police and Muslim militants seeking to overthrow the government has left about 860 people dead since March 1992.

But critics say the image of Islamic activists in television shows is often "superficial and unrealistic," according to Essam Bessila, from the daily Al-Akhbar.

He said one series, "Arms and Illusion," shown since July could

have "the opposite of the intended effect."

The series was inspired by events in the Cairo slum of Imbaba, a fiefdom of the Islamists in the early 1990s, until security forces invaded the neighbourhood late 1992.

Muslim extremists have responded angrily to the new trend. Last year they issued death threats against the director of "The Terrorist," Nader Galal, and last week they condemned Sarwat Al Ousheiri, the director of "Escaping the Crisis."

But directors and actors have sworn to "continue the battle."

"My wife insisted at first that I should not play in 'The Terrorist,'" Mr. Imam has said. "But when she saw the corpse of a little girl killed in the (failed) assassination attempt against Prime Minister Atef Sedki" in October 1993 "she pushed me into it," he said.

"I am a true Muslim and I will wipe out terrorism by continuing to make people laugh," Mr. Imam said.

Ben Baz urges Muslims to boycott women conference

DUBAI (Agencies) — Saudi Arabia's leading cleric said Muslims should boycott the U.N. Fourth Conference on Women because some items on the agenda were contrary to Islamic principles and promoted obscenity.

Gulf News agencies said Abdul Aziz Ben Baz made his statement on Sunday night, two days after a similar statement by the Higher Council of Ulema, which he heads.

The Council of Experts is the highest religious authority in Saudi Arabia, where strict Islamic laws are applied.

Sheikh Ben Baz was quoted as saying Muslims should boycott the conference, which opened in Beijing on Monday, "because its agenda includes decisions that contradict Islam."

He said the conference is working to "eliminate laws that differentiate between men and women... and calls for obscenity through practising safe sex, extra-marital sex and educating young men and women about sexual issues."

He said the aims of the conference include "stripping humanity of its dignity."

Conservatives, including the Vatican and a number of Islamic states, oppose some of the language of a draft "platform for action" to be debated at the conference, notably those parts dealing with contraception and abortion.

Saudi Arabia did not send delegates to the conference. Sheikh Ben Baz, in a message broadcast on state radio, appealed to Muslim leaders "to take a united stand against this aggression that targets Muslims."

Sheikh Ben Baz added that the document also expresses "atheistic principles, such as one calling for the abrogation of laws making a distinction between men and women on the grounds that religion prevents equality between the sexes."

The Council of the Ulemas also charged in a statement issued Sunday the working document authorises "immoral acts" and aims to destroy family life.

JORDAN TIMES, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1995

NEWS IN BRIEF

More Israelis favour Golan pullout

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A growing number of Israelis support a withdrawal from the strategic Golan Heights in exchange for peace with Syria, although they remain in the minority, a poll showed Monday. Thirty per cent of Israeli Jews interviewed support a complete withdrawal from the Golan in exchange for security guarantees and diplomatic relations with Syria, compared to 23 per cent in December 1994, a poll by the Modin Ezrahi institute said. The number opposed to a total withdrawal has fallen 10 points, from 64 to 54 per cent, according to the poll, conducted for Bar Ilan University's strategic studies centre. The poll of 1,233 Jewish adults was conducted last month.

Iran says pilgrim flights to resume

NICOSIA (R) — Iran said on Monday flights carrying Iranians on pilgrimage to Mecca were resuming after being stopped last month. The official Iranian news agency IRNA said the flights, from Tehran and six other cities, were to start on Monday "after a one-month suspension" to carry 72,000 Iranians wanting to perform Umrah. The flights were "suspended because of the Saudi government not issuing visa for the pilgrims," the agency said. Iran said last month Saudi Arabia also refused to issue permits for the flights. Saudi Arabia and Iran have been at odds about the nature of Hajj, which attracts up to two million Muslims from around the world. While Riyadh says that the pilgrimage is a religious affair that should not be politicised, Tehran insists that it rallies denouncing what it calls enemies of Islam — the United States and Israel — should be held during Hajj.

Iranian 'messenger' sentenced to death

DUBAI (AFP) — An Iranian national proclaiming himself the "messenger of God" has been sentenced to death in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Iran's General Consul Rahim Abedin Zadeh said here Monday. Hassan Ghulam Hussein Dana, 35-year-old trader, was convicted of apostasy on Aug. 2 by Islamic criminal court of Sharjah. Mr. Dana proclaimed himself "messenger of God" for the first time in September 1994 during a trial by the same court, which had accused him with two other men of embezzlement. Mr. Zadeh said, adding that he repeated his claim later in jail. The court did not say when Mr. Dana would be executed. Mr. Zadeh confirmed that an Iranian religious scholar had visited Mr. Dana to talk him into repenting. A newspaper here, Al Khaleej, said the court had given Mr. Dana ten months to "repent and reenter the rightful path," but he insisted on being "messenger of God" even if given ten years.

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British energy secretary visits UAE

ABU DHABI (AFP) — British Energy Secretary Tim Eggar arrived in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Monday for talks on energy cooperation and the world oil market. British embassy officials said. The officials gave no further details of the visit, which followed criticism by Gulf states and other oil producers after Britain increased oil output from its North Sea fields. The 12-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has blamed Britain, Norway and other independent oil producers for weak crude prices, which have remained nearly four dollars below OPEC's target of \$21. British Petroleum is a key shareholder in Abu Dhabi's energy sector along with the French Total and the Japan Oil Development Company. The official news agency WAM said Mr. Eggar was met by former Oil Minister Yousef Omar Ben Yousef, director of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) and secretary general of the Supreme Petroleum Council, which runs the emirate's energy sector. The UAE is the third biggest producer in OPEC, with an output quota of 2.16 million barrels per day.

Kuwait foils 'infiltration' attempts

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwait has foiled several infiltration attempts by sea, the interior minister told Monday's Al Watan newspaper. Sheikh Ali Sabah Al Salem Al Sabah did not specify where the infiltrators came from, but said that there was "no need for concern." Kuwait often reports infiltration attempts by Iranians and Iraqis, most of them seeking work in the oil rich Gulf country. He also said there "has been no change" on the northern border with Iraq, and that Kuwait continues to monitor "closely" the situation there. Some 1,400 U.S. soldiers began last Wednesday war games in the Kuwaiti desert in a bid to deter Iraq from launching any attack on the emirate. Kuwaiti troops are to join the manoeuvres by mid-September.

Greece protests use of name 'Macedonia' in Beijing

ATHENS (AFP) — The Greek delegation to the World Conference of Women has protested to the United Nations about the use of the name "Macedonia" to refer to delegations from that country, the Greek press reported Monday. In a letter to the United Nations Saturday, the head of the Greek delegation Maria Arsenise reproached the organising committee for having referred to the delegation from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as "Macedonian." She stressed that "there is no state at the United Nations under the name of Macedonia." The matter has been a sensitive issue for Greece since the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. Athens is refusing to recognise the former Yugoslav republic under the name of Macedonia, which it considers as part of the Greek national heritage. In 1993, the United Nations recognised it under the name "the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia." But Greece has imposed an economic blockade against its neighbour since February 1994 and Washington is trying to convince the two sides to resume U.S.-brokered negotiations, deadlocked over the parties' refusal to make concessions.

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

Dep. Amman 8:00 every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday

Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday

Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

6:40 Beirut (RJ)

08:00 Agaba (RJ)

09:00 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

12:40 Madrid (RJ)

12:45 Vienna (RJ)

13:00 Geneva, Brussels (RJ)

13:10 Paris (RJ)

13:10 Cairo, Alexandria (RJ)

14:05 London (RJ)

14:05 Madrid (RJ)

21:05 London (RJ)

21:20 Jeddah (RJ)

21:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)

21:45 Damascus (RJ)

22:20 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

22:30 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:30 Damascus, Paris (AF)

06:45 Beirut (ME)

06:45 Cairo (MS)

13:40 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)

14:00 Munich (YF)

14:00 Riyadh (SV)

14:00 Aden (DY)

21:00 Beirut (ME)

21:10 Amsterdam (KL)

06:55 Bucharest (RO)

06:55 Princess Hay Hospital (GY)

07:00 Princess Hay Hospital (GY)

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BRIEF

Jordan pullout

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Princess Basma elected vice chairperson of Beijing conference for Asian region

By Caroline Faraj
Special to the Jordan Times

BEIJING — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, the head of the Jordanian delegation to the Fourth World Conference on Women which opened here Monday, has been elected vice chairperson of the conference for the Asian region.

Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, Bangladeshi Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and the heads of the Japanese, Malaysian and Syrian delegations share the same post with the Princess.

Princess Basma Monday visited Ms. Bhutto and discussed the role of Arab and Islamic nations at the Beijing conference.

The Princess praised Ms. Bhutto's role in representing Islamic views and discussed scopes of cooperation in social affairs between Jordan and Pakistan at the bilateral and non-governmental levels especially in matters relevant to women.

Princess Basma later received the head of the Botswana delegation and discussed coordinating the standpoints of Third World

countries at the conference.

Princess Basma also met with the executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Carol Bellamy to discuss cooperation between the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF) and UNICEF.

The areas of particular interest to both organisations would be the expansion

Regent sees financial industry cooperation as road to international markets

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Monday told bank executives, industrialists, and insurance brokers that cooperation among their industries would greatly help Jordan move into the international financial marketplaces.

Addressing the final session of a two-day meeting on topics related to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) conference, the Regent said he hoped the planned regional development bank will create bridges between Jordanian financial markets and international financial institutions.

The bank would help local financial institutions interact with and incorporate themselves into the world financial market, the Regent said.

The two-day meeting held at the Amman Marriott Hotel in Amman was attended

by 50 delegates representing banking institutions and other companies.

The Regent said dialogue helps the exchange of ideas

aimed at encouraging investments and urged the delegates to maintain their consultations and meetings especially after the conference is over.

The Regent said financial institutions and banks possess the mechanism and the expertise to play a key role in investments and in helping the Jordanian economy link up with world economies.

With Jordanian banks possessing assets estimated at more than \$8 billion, institutions should cooperate with the Central Bank of Jordan to promote the work of other sectors in the Jordanian economy through their expertise, the Regent said.

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Strike shuts down Karachi

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP) — A militant ethnic group shut down Pakistan's largest city of Karachi Monday with a strike to protest alleged police abuses of female activists.

At least eight people were killed overnight and Monday in strike-related violence, police said.

Among the dead was a plainclothes police officer, who was taken off a bus late Sunday by unidentified gunmen and executed, witnesses said.

A fellow officer, who was travelling with him, was taken by the gunmen and has not been seen since.

The killings occurred despite a government order to Karachi Security Forces to shoot on sight anyone carrying a weapon or disturbing the peace.

The order, issued late Sun-

day by Interior Minister Nasrullah Babar, was strongly condemned by the Mohajir Qaumi Movement, the group that called the strike.

"No individual minister has the right to make his own laws ... It is an incentive to kill people. It's the law of the jungle," Shoib Bokhari, MQM spokesman, told the Associated Press.

Karachi, a bustling port city of 12 million people, was completely closed Monday. The Karachi Stock Exchange and financial institutions remained closed.

Operations at the Arabian Sea port ground to a halt and the usually teeming streets were largely deserted.

Police and rangers patrolled the more violent neighbourhoods in central and west Karachi in armoured personnel carriers

and jeeps mounted with machineguns.

In several neighbourhoods boys set at least 10 vehicles on fire, including a passenger bus, police said. In central Liaqatabad and Western Orangi neighbourhoods young men with guns roamed the narrow lanes firing at police patrols and hiding.

Gunmen attacked a police patrol in central Karachi, injuring two officers, police said. Another three members of the security force were injured in separate firing incidents.

Strikes have become a regular means of protest for the MQM, which represents Indian Muslims who settled in Pakistan after independence in 1947. They say the government discriminates against Mohajirs, denying them access to good jobs

and educational institutions. MQM leaders say Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's government is trying to crush the organisation, her biggest political opposition in Karachi.

Police blame much of the violence in Karachi in recent months on the largest faction of the MQM, led by Altaf Hussain, who lives in Britain. At least 1,300 people have been killed so far this year.

In recent weeks police and rangers have been conducting house-to-house searches in some of the hardest hit areas looking for weapons and militants.

International human rights groups and residents have accused the police of using excessive force, illegally detaining young men and taking bribes before releasing them.



Bangladeshi police use shotguns to disperse clashing pro-strike and anti-strike groups in Dhaka at the end of a 32-hour nationwide work stoppage (AFP photo)

Bangladesh women activists criticise Zia for ignoring rape, killing of girl

DHAKA (AFP) — Several hundred women in a rally here Monday criticised Bangladeshi Prime Minister Khaleda Zia for taking part in the Beijing U.N. World Conference on Women while ignoring the alleged rape and killing of a girl by police last week.

"She (Zia) should not attend the conference and speak about the empowerment of women while keeping the women of her own country insecure and vulnerable," said activist Farida Akhter.

She said Mrs Zia should have cancelled the trip to take action against those responsible for the girl's death.

Yasmin Akhter, 14, was allegedly raped and killed by police in northern Dinajpur district last week. A government probe is under way after seven more people were killed in anti-police demonstrations.

Three policemen allegedly involved in the incident have been arrested and top district officials were transferred.

Mrs Zia, Bangladesh's first woman premier, currently in Beijing, has not yet commented on the incident.

"The Dinajpur incident was not a separate one, rather it was the continuation of police atrocities against innocent people, especially women," said

Yawn, I've never had so much fun

LONDON (R) — An anti-depressant drug is giving patients an uplifting bonus — when they yawn, they have an orgasm. British newspapers quoted a scientific study published in the latest edition of *New Scientist* magazine. The report said five per cent of patients taking the drug Clomipramine had noticed the side-effect, which had also been noticed by people taking another drug, Prozac, even though the normal effect of both drugs is to inhibit sexual desire. The discovery could herald a new era in sexual relationships, the newspapers said.

American dancer wins award

EDINBURGH, Scotland (R) — American dancer Mark Morris has won the 1995 Hamada Award, set up as top prize for artistic excellence at the Edinburgh Festival by a mysterious Japanese businessman who has since disappeared without trace. Morris and his troupe have been a sell-out success at the Edinburgh Festival for three years running. The Scotsman newspaper provides a judging panel for the award, named for a Japanese businessman who set up the Hamada Foundation with a £500,000 (\$775,800) cash gift. A regular festival visitor for many years, Zenya Hamada has not been seen since the 1993 awards luncheon.

Swimming ritual attracts 10,000 Taiwanese

TAIPEI (R) — More than 10,000 Taiwanese swam across the island's scenic Sun Moon Lake in a time-honoured ritual to celebrate the upcoming Chinese mid-autumn festival, or the Moon Festival, an organiser said. Participants aged between six and 84 took part in the mass swim across the four-kilometre mountain lake in the central county of Nantou, an organiser said by telephone. The activity is held every year in the Sun Moon Lake before the mid-autumn festival, one of the most important Chinese festivals, on the 15th day of the lunar month of August. It falls on Sept. 9 this year.

Sally Field wants more clout for women

HUAIROU, China (AP) — Sally Field says working with poor women and children in Nepal has made her think twice about her priorities. The actress told the world's biggest women's conference in China Sunday that she'll keep crusading for more clout for women in Hollywood, even though her recent humanitarian work has made that fight seem less important. "How can I talk about women in film now?" said the two-time Academy Award winner. "It seems such a great luxury to be able to talk about the arts." Field, who was in Nepal for the Save the Children charity, spoke to participants at a non-governmental gathering paralleling the United Nations' fourth World Conference on Women.

Filipino censor defends ban on Streep movie

MANILA (AFP) — The Philippines' chief censor Monday defended a ban on the movie *The Bridges of Madison County* that fleetingly showed American actress Meryl Streep's pubic hair, saying it was offensive to Filipino women and culture. Movie and Television Review and Classification Board chief Henrietta Mendez also slammed Hollywood for cultural imperialism, saying it was trying to impose U.S. values on other countries. The film, based on the novel of the same name, chronicles a torrid, four-day midlife romance between a National Geographic magazine photographer played by Clint Eastwood and a bored Iowa housewife played by Streep.

Britain, Ireland meet on N. Irish peace deadlock

DUBLIN (R) — The British and Irish governments held crunch talks Monday to defuse a crisis over the decommissioning of IRA guerrilla arms which has brought their year-old Northern Ireland peace drive to a standstill.

Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring and Britain's Northern Ireland Secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew, met in Dublin at the start of a crucial week for Anglo-Irish efforts to convene all-party talks on a lasting political settlement.

Neither minister made any comments to waiting reporters.

Sir Patrick was then due to travel to the Northern Ireland capital Belfast for a meeting with Gerry Adams, president of the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) political

wing Sinn Fein. The meetings are supposed to lay the groundwork for an Anglo-Irish summit in Britain Wednesday at which new proposals to breathe life into the peace process are expected to be unveiled.

But there are signs they will run into stiff opposition from Sinn Fein, which seeks to end British rule of Northern Ireland, because they may seek to get the IRA to disarm before Britain convenes talks on a political settlement.

Mr. Adams said at the weekend there was no way the IRA would contemplate handing over weapons used in a 25-year war against Britain and repeated his call for a date to be set for all-party talks.

But Britain says no political group can come to the

conference table as long as it has an army of supporters still in possession of weapons it might use to resume its war if the discussions founder.

Irish officials say British Prime Minister John Major and his Irish counterpart John Bruton will establish an international commission Wednesday to oversee the surrender of IRA and Protestant loyalist weapons.

But Mr. Adams has made clear there will be no body if its brief is to take IRA arms out of service before all-party talks are launched.

George Mitchell, a former U.S. senator who heads President Bill Clinton's Ireland economy advisory team, is expected to head the commission and involve Washington directly in the

peace process for the first time.

Sources close to the peace process said the Dublin government believes a commitment by the IRA not to use its arsenal first or for any reason other than self-defence might help break the peace process log-jam.

Protestant loyalist gunmen, who fought for 25 years to keep Northern Ireland British, made a similar pledge this month and have called on their IRA rivals to do likewise.

The rival guerrillas called ceasefires last year which have led to 12 months of rare peace but little real progress towards reconciling Protestant determination to keep Northern Ireland British and Catholic dreams of a re-united Ireland.

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U.N. refugee chief flies to Rwanda for talks on refugees

DAR ES SALAAM (R) — U.N. refugee chief Sadako Ogata, having little luck in resolving the problem of bringing home Rwandan refugees, flew to Rwanda Monday after Tanzania hinted it might forcibly remove them from its soil.

Mrs. Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (UNHCR), left for Kigali on the fourth leg of a tour to Kenya, Burundi, Tanzania, Rwanda and Zaire undertaken after Zaire tried to throw out refugees there last month.

Tanzanian Prime Minister Cleopha Msuya, meeting Mrs. Ogata Monday, turned down her appeal for the country to reopen its borders with Rwanda and Burundi.

"Tanzania has made its position very clear and though she does not approve there is a mutual understanding," UNHCR representa-

tive Andrew Sokira told Reuters.

"We want the international community to work towards the return of the refugees to their countries of origin as quickly as possible," Defence Minister Abdurahman Kinana said after meeting Mrs. Ogata Sunday.

Mr. Msuya also made a veiled threat that Tanzania would follow the Zairean example of expelling refugees. The deportations stopped after 15,000 refugees were thrown out of eastern Zaire.

"We hope we shall not be pushed into a corner and be forced to use crude methods," Mr. Msuya was quoted by his office as saying.

The issue was indirectly broached and Madame Ogata was told that, though Tanzania wants a quick solution to the problem, it is a civilised nation which

would not rush into anything," a U.N. official said.

Tanzania says it cannot indefinitely continue to give asylum for the 712,000 Rwandan and Burundian refugees in camps in the west of the country near the borders with Rwanda and Burundi.

Tanzania blames the refugees for insecurity and many crimes, including the murder of more than 80 Tanzanians, and in March shut its borders with Rwanda and Burundi to stop more crossing.

Many are Rwandan Hutus who fled during last year's civil war and say they fear being killed in reprisal for the genocide of up to a million Tutsis and Hutu moderates if they return.

In Kigali, Mrs. Ogata was expected to seek renewed assurances from Rwanda's government that would speed the return of refugees. She is also scheduled to visit camps in eastern Zaire.

Solemn services mark 50th anniversary of World War II's end

HONOLULU (AP) — Paying a final tribute to America's aging warriors, President Clinton attended solemn religious services Sunday in a prayerful search for lessons of the tragedy of World War II.

In surprisingly brief remarks capping V-J Day commemorations, Mr. Clinton said historians looking back centuries from now will say the war showed that people will reject repression and prejudice to fight for freedom.

"I believe the lesson will be that people, when given a choice, will not choose to live under empire; that citizens, when given a choice, will not choose to live under dictators; that people, when given the opportunity to let the better angles of their natures rise to the top, will not embrace theories of political or racial or ethnic or religious superiority," he said.

On a day filled with hymns and hallelujahs, Mr. Clinton spoke for less than five minutes — allowing the poignant words of veterans to resonate.

The president and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton parted after the services.

Mr. Clinton headed to California for a two-day trip. Mrs. Clinton left for China, where she will address an international women's conference.

Both trips are heavy with political implications. Mr. Clinton's 26th trip to California marks a new stage in his re-election campaign, with a heavy travel schedule ahead this fall.

Mr. Clinton hopes to spotlight women's rights issues in China, while delicately avoiding a confrontation with the Communist regime. Aides hope the trip pays dividends domestically: women are a huge voting bloc that favoured Mr. Clinton in 1992.

During the Sunday commemorative ceremony, participants delivered moving speeches, listened to Buddhist and Hawaiian prayers and sang "Amazing Grace" and "America The Beautiful" in the hillside amphitheatre lined by palm trees. More than 2,500 people attended the non-denominational services, held in steamy weather at the Waikiki Band Shell.

Col. Harry Fukuhara, a Japanese immigrant in U.S. Army Intelligence during

World War II had two brothers in Japanese suicide units as the war drew to a close. Their mission — never carried out — targeted sites near Fukuoka's unit.

The wrinkled war hero tugged a hushed crowd, "thanks to a higher power, meeting my two brothers on the battlefield was avoided."

Sen. Howell Heflin, a decorated World War II veteran, read from the Bible, then concluded: "The prayer of the veterans of World War II is that there will never be a World War III."

The service marked the end of several years of World War II observances. Former President George Bush came to Pearl Harbour on Dec. 7, 1991, to mark the 50th anniversary of the Japanese attack that brought the United States into the war.

Mr. Clinton, the first president born after World War II, travelled to Normandy, France, last year to celebrate D-Day, the landing of allied forces that led to the end of the war in Europe. And last May 9, Mr. Clinton went to Red Square in Moscow for a Victory Day tribute to the 27 million Soviets who died defeating Nazi Germany.

A variety of protesters, many of whom opposed nuclear testing in France, sang and chanted behind fences at the back of the outdoor theatre, creating a minor disturbance for people in the last rows of the service.

Antigua, and hurricane watches were in effect for the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. Tropical storm warnings were issued for nearby Guadeloupe and Dominica.

Forecasters said there were indications that Luis might slow down and creep across the Leeward Islands, which would pound island homes and businesses with hours or even days of dangerous winds and rain. At its current direction and speed, Luis was expected to slam into Puerto Rico Wednesday. The hurricane had an unusually large eye, estimated at about 56 kilometres wide, and its powerful winds extended outward for some 225 kilometres.

Residents of Antigua, Montserrat and the other Leeward Islands swung into action, boarding up windows,

dows, fuelling cars and stockpiling canned goods and drinking water.

Most needed little encouragement, remembering only too well the devastation wrought by similar-sized hurricane Hugo in 1989. Hugo was blamed for the deaths of more than two dozen Caribbean residents. It caused billions of dollars worth of damage to tourist hotels, private homes and businesses. The storm roared across a half-dozen islands before turning north to hit South Carolina.

On Montserrat, Hugo destroyed more than 95 per cent of the island's homes, where some 12,000 residents live.

The path of hurricane Luis was a cruel blow to a tiny British colony known for its verdant landscapes, peaceful lifestyle, and proud but friendly people.

Hurricane Luis bears down on Caribbean

LONG GROUND, Montserrat (R) — Residents of this tiny island, who spent the past seven weeks living with the threat of a deadly volcanic eruption, prepared Monday to face an even more lethal foe, hurricane Luis and its screaming 140 mph (225 kph) winds.

Luis, the most powerful hurricane to emerge in the busiest season in decades, was expected to lash Montserrat and the neighbouring Caribbean islands beginning late Monday night, according to the National Hurricane Centre in Miami.

At 11 p.m. EDT (0300 GMT Monday), Luis was located 571 kilometres east of the Leeward Islands and was churning due west at 14 mph (22 kph), hurricane centre forecasters said.

Hurricane warnings were issued from St. Martin to

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Writers are not policemen

THE JORDAN Writers Association (JWA) is going too far in its actions against actor Hisham Yanis for visiting Israel and for contemplating together with co-actor Nabil Sawalha to show their popular theatre production "Welcome Normalisation" in Israel. JWA maintains that these contacts and visits violate its "code of honour," and threatened to take disciplinary action against Mr. Yanis which may entail his expulsion from the association.

With all due respect to JWA and its views against normalisation with Israel, we believe that this kind of perspective is contrary to the law of the land after the peace treaty with Israel was duly signed and ratified. The attempt by some trade and professional associations to override the treaty and its implications is a prescription for an unnecessary confrontation between the state and such groups. The government has already called on trade unions and associations to stick to their immediate scope of concern and to refrain from going political. While we are against curbing any freedoms or rights of any group or individual, we still believe that associations have no business making restrictions on their members in a manner that runs counter to the law of the land.

Over and above these considerations, we cannot fault Messrs. Yanis and Sawalha for visiting Israel or for even describing Israeli women as beautiful. It should not be a crime to depict women as beautiful or otherwise since above all beauty is in the eye of the beholder. There are many Arabs living in Israel enjoying Israeli citizenship, through no fault of theirs. They cannot be viewed as traitors by any stretch of the imagination. Contacting them or the people with whom they cohabit is sensible, reasonable, useful and necessary. JWA is the last Arab institution that should frown on opportunities to carry out culture and points of view to the other side. We think JWA should reconsider its policy on this issue and adopt a new code of honour that is in tune with common sense and the new realities.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

COMMENTING ON the latest Syrian moves in the Middle East political scene, a writer in Al Dustour said Monday that Damascus is motivated by the developments in Iraq and its desire to reassert its own role in the region. Saleh Qallab expressed the belief that the Syrian President has embarked on contacts with Iran and Egypt after careful calculations and deep considerations, and after ascertaining that changes in Iraq are bound to happen. Hafez Al Assad has kept silent since the defection to Jordan last month by two top Iraqi army officers, simply because he was ready for these developments, which took Syria and many other Middle Eastern players by surprise, said the writer. But, he said, Mr. Assad has been undoubtedly in close contact with Iraqi opposition groups, including army officers since 1970, and he still hopes to unify the ruling Baath parties in Syria and Iraq. No doubt Mr. Assad still considers himself the remaining godfather of the Baath Party, and should any change happen, said the writer, he would hope to have a say in it, and would like to see Syria at the forefront in any moves to bring about changes in Iraq through military or peaceful means.

A WRITER in Al Ra'i addressed the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs' plans for convening a national conference on municipalities by the middle of September and the main problems which the conference is bound to tackle. Nazih said that the newly elected municipal councils and mayors who have given many promises to the voters in the election campaigns in July, are eager to keep their promises but are confronted with the reality that their coffers are empty and could not carry out the promised projects and the improved municipal services. The main issue facing the coming conference, stressed the writer, is the lack of funds at the local councils, which by no means can achieve miracles to satisfy the voters' wishes and fulfil their dreams.

The View from Fourth Circle

Shopping for cotton socks and the Arab future

IF YOU want better to understand the grandeur and the agony of the contemporary Arab World, do as I have done in the last several weeks: Go shopping for 100 per cent cotton socks in Damascus and Cairo.

To shop for cotton socks in the great citadels of Arab urbanism is not an ordinary commercial enterprise. This is not like, for example, popping into the Radio Shack shop on Gardens Street in Amman, the Toys 'R Us shop in Jeddah, or the Safeway in suburban Kuwait to transact purchases of some hard plastic commodities imported from some distant factories. Cairo and Damascus are different, richer urban places than the rest of the Arab World, and shopping for indigenous production there is a more meaningful yet demanding experience in both political and emotional terms.

My quest for the great Arab cotton socks was neither merely an exercise in particularist consumerism nor a directionless adventure in urban wandering. It was a combination of the two that had deeper implications for me about the condition of the Arab Nation (for those readers for whom the term 'Arab Nation' is perplexing or even jarring, I suggest relaxing in cotton garb and substituting the term with Arab region or Arab World). For me and many others in this area, Damascus and Cairo retain something special yet intangible — a feeling, a hope, a memory, a vague sense of self-confident Arabism, maybe only a comfortable ancient humanism that endures because it is based on the increasingly elusive logic and dynamism of what once made Arab cities great. The cotton socks, I suspect, may have been only the excuse that I used to spend hours walking around both cities.

The most personally and politically irritating thing that struck me about both Cairo and Damascus — cities that I have known and loved for most of my adult life — was the large number of security personnel especially but not only around government buildings. This is not peculiar to Cairo or Damascus in the modern Arab World, where security is usually the leading concern and largest expenditure of governments. What is so incongruous about the proliferation of armed security personnel in these two capital cities is the shocking contrast between the past and the present — between historical centres of great culture that once enriched the entirety of human civilisation on earth, and contemporary tensions that necessitate a desperate and sad resort to massive violence and the presence of armed guards on most street corners.

It was pretty distracting trying to find the perfect pair of cotton socks amidst so many soldiers and plainclothed security personnel. But — stimulated as I was by the faded riches of urban history and the still visible glory of centuries past — I persevered. I was determined to warm my feet in the soft comfort of 100 per cent Arab cotton, even if my spirit were to remain plagued by the agony of Arab political violence. I was intellectually and politically prepared to defend this exercise against even the most fearsome interrogation or show of force. Any armed policeman or security person who stopped me and asked what I was doing peeking around corners and into shops and asking many questions would be told that I was in search of Arab

grandeur in the form of 100 per cent cotton socks. I would not be intimidated.

The deterioration of the quality of modern Arab political culture in Damascus and Cairo was as visible as the equally glaring and lamentable deterioration in the fabric of the urban architecture. Cairo and Damascus are the only two Arab cities I know of — Algiers and Beirut get close, but they speak very softly these days — whose cultured urbanism is so deep that they could absorb a thick veneer of European architectural design in the 19th and early 20th centuries without destroying the underlying strengths of Arab cultural urbanism.

Despite their significant recent economic problems and political stress, the streets of Cairo and Damascus still speak of an audacious attempt at the turn of the century to become European. The grandeur and beauty of this attempt are visible to the eye today — streets that look Parisian, faded old tearooms that are very Vietnamese, shops that speak of London's venerable mercantile tradition. The impressive thing about Cairo and Damascus at the end of the 19th century was not that they dared to absorb the single most powerful global cultural-ideological force of the second millennium — the European Enlightenment in its expansive and often predatory colonial garb — but that they effectively succeeded in doing so without significantly upsetting the indigenous elements of urbanism that had made Cairo and Damascus such important cities by the middle of the 19th century.

My quest for the perfect Arab cotton socks, I realised, was not only about warming my feet but also about warming my spirit. I was fed up and mad about the ignominy of the modern Arab order — of politically and militarily violent Arab governments that treated their own people and other Arabs with only erratic respect and dignity, and of individual Arabs who were so despairing of improving their quality of life that they sought refuge in amassing personal riches while neglecting their wider responsibility to society as a whole.

The despair of ordinary families throughout the Arab World was leading to heightened political tensions that were in turn leading to greater misuse of power by unelected, unaccountable governments whose circles of supporters and advisers were consistently narrowing onto a smaller and ever more incestuous base. The outlet for most families, it seemed, was to watch imported junk on television and go shopping for imported junk in new mega-stores while acquiescing in new brands of home-grown political morality characterised by the increasingly violent and intemperate tendencies of ruling establishments and growing oppositions.

This was hard for me to accept as the fate of the modern Arab Nation. There had to be signs of better ways, and I suspected that such signs were to be found in those places that had alternately generated and preserved the finest traditions of Arab culture and civilisation — our great Arab cities. I was not disappointed, for both Damascus and Cairo today, despite their political and economic challenges, retain the powerful elements of Arab/Islamic urban

culture that have been such important factors in the continuous renewal of Arab identity and culture for many centuries.

Perhaps the single most important element in this respect is the tradition of demographic pluralism and civility, of many different religions and ethnic groups living and working together to generate the kind of intellectual, economic and cultural dynamism that allowed these and other Arab cities to become such important international centres of trade, thought and science. The best Arab urbanism was, and remains, a synthesis of different identities and traditions; distinct quarters for Jews, Christians, Armenians, Kurds and other minorities were not necessarily barriers to their people's inclusion in society but definitors of identities that are formally accepted and protected by the dominant Arab/Islamic culture.

This powerful synthesis of human identities still defines the great Arab cities of Cairo and Damascus. Like the beautiful architectural elements that still force themselves on the visitor from behind the faded paint and cracked facades of old buildings, the multi-cultural, humanistic vigour of old Arab urbanism still defiantly pokes its durable and beautiful head out of the jungle of political violence and materialistic moral vagrancy that defines so much of modern Arab culture.

The capital assets of civilisation that history has always denominated in the currency of urbanism should be very important to the Arab people today as we seek to replace political cultures of violence and exclusion with more sensible cultures of tolerance, participation and greater intellectual and material productivity. We do not need to go very far afield to find pointers towards the elements of our political redemption and our national salvation. Those pointers are within us and amongst us in great ancient citadels of urban civilisation such as Damascus and Cairo, in the tens of thousands of small villages and towns that dot the entire Arab World, and in persistent attempts such as ours in Jordan to liberalise and modernise our new political systems that are based on old cultural identities.

This was my conclusion at the end of my search for the perfect pair of Arab cotton socks. I was offered many fake substitutes — cheap, false gods of the thread, I thought — including polyester-cotton mixtures from the Far East and assorted high-tech pretenders from the industrialised North. Neither my spirit nor my feet would have any of them, though, and held out for pure cotton socks made in Cairo and Damascus. I found them in the end, as I knew I would, deep in the heart of the two cities. They were displayed with a brand of elegance and even pride that I did not detect among the sellers of imported juice-squeezers, foam sandals and cheap plastic toys who now dominate Arab markets, or among the ubiquitous uniformed and plain-clothed men who carry guns and who stalk every corner of the modern lands of the Arabs.

I paid my money and took my cotton socks and I walked away smiling and pleased, perhaps because I had verified something real about the Arab past, perhaps because I knew something good about the Arab future.

Israel obviously having second thoughts about deals with Palestinians

By Pascal B. Karmy

ISRAEL HAS not been honouring its commitments under the Oslo accord. Any person who has been observing the stream of negotiations, agreements and understandings reached between Israel and the Palestine National Authority (PNA) may come out with the impression that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres are having second thoughts or regrets about including the West Bank in the Oslo accord and would have preferred to restrict the accord to the Gaza Strip. An observer would also note that the Israeli delegations are interpreting the provisions of the Oslo accord quite restrictively with a view to curtailing the rights of the Palestinians in the West Bank or to reduce them to the minimum so as to prevent Palestinians from forming one compact unit of the West Bank and ultimately a Palestinian state with Gaza Strip. This division of the West Bank contradicts Article IV of the Oslo accord, which "views the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a single territorial unit whose integrity will be

preserved during the interim period."

If both these territories should be viewed as a single territorial unit, one of its components, the West Bank, should be maintained as a compact territorial unit in which about one-and-a-half million Palestinians live. Indeed, Ramallah, East Jerusalem, Nablus, Jenin, Hebron, Bethlehem and other Palestinian towns and villages are of the same importance to Palestinians.

The redeployment of Israeli military forces has been long overdue. Under Article XIII of the Oslo accord redeployment of the Israeli army should take place "not later than the eve of the elections for the Palestine Council." However, reached PLO-Israel reach an agreement covering the redeployment of Israeli military forces. Under this agreement, there will be a complete redeployment of Israeli forces in the rural zones (called Area B) while the Palestine police will assume responsibility for public order for Palestinians. But Israel will have overriding responsibility for security and for protecting Israelis.

The question of the Palestine Council has not so far been resolved. The negotiations have been turning in a vicious circle.

No agreement has been reached on the number of council members and Israel is refusing to allow Palestinians of Jerusalem to run in the elections. Israel's stand on this matter contradicts Annex I of the Oslo accord, which stipulates that:

"Palestinians of Jerusalem who live there will have the right to participate in the election process."

This provision confers upon the Palestinians of Jerusalem the right to elect and be elected as well. The word "election" means "electing or being elected," according to the Oxford and Westminister dictionaries.

Another important problem which calls for concrete resolution is the question of water. The Israelis have initially argued that the Palestinians in the West Bank have no right to the underground water resources and that they should accept the consumption of only a part of the water, the biggest share being allotted to the settlements. Now, apparently, Israel has conceded that the Palestinians have a right to the underground water. But the mechanism of implementing this right has been postponed. It should be remembered that Annex III of the Oslo accord provided that a water development programme should be prepared by experts from both sides and that both should cooperate in the management of water resources in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and that

cooperation will include proposals for studies and plans on water rights of each party as well as on equitable utilisation of joint water resources for implementation in and beyond the interim period.

Moreover, quite apart from the Oslo accord, Palestinians have been living in the West Bank and Gaza for centuries and thus have a superior right to the underground water resources than the newcomers, the Jewish settlers, whose settlements on occupied territories are "ab initio" illegal under international law.

I believe that PNA leader Yasser Arafat is conceding too much in accepting certain conditions in negotiations with Mr. Peres, especially those which are not in conformity with the Oslo accord provisions.

The last redeployment of the Israeli army will be completed by February or July 1997, according to the Taba agreement. Hopefully, it will be honoured by Israel. But one wonders what will happen if the Likud Party wins the Israeli elections to the Knesset in 1996 and a new Israeli government is formed in 1997.

LETTERS

Facts distorted

to the Editor:

I WAS amazed at an Aug. 25 report by the Israeli daily, Ma'ariv, which claimed that three Israeli officials met in Geneva in late June with Syrian and Lebanese officials.

The report, quoting Avraham Katz Oz, a former minister of agriculture who heads Israel's delegation to the Water Resources Working Group of the Multilateral Peace Talks, claimed that the Syrian delegation to the negotiations was a retired minister of planning, and named both the supposedly retired minister and the "head" of the Lebanese delegation. The report spoke of extremely important documents that the Syrians and the Lebanese delegations brought with them, saying that these documents were

obtained extremely important papers from the Syrians and the Lebanese delegates. Actually, the papers each of experts presented contained no more information than any Syrian and Lebanese paper contained. Such papers were repeatedly presented at international and regional seminars. I say this because I am familiar with the Syrian and Lebanese data; they are no secret, and any expert in the field can obtain them by looking up Syrian and Lebanese papers presented in Damascus, Amman, Cairo, the Arab League, Kuwait, UNDP seminars and elsewhere. I am actually surprised that the Israelis have not had them on file for a long time.

My comments are not meant to defend Syria. Nor am I their spokesman. The comments are nonetheless meant to defend an effort that I started when I headed the Jordanian delegation to the multilateral talks, an effort that aimed at pooling the expertise in the region and the advanced countries to help find collective answers to the many challenges facing us regarding water resources in the Middle East.

I believe the motive of the distortion of the proceedings and objectives of this international U.N. seminar is political. I further regret that professional meetings of experts representing only themselves are used for political fantasies through inaccurate press reporting. I do not believe such manoeuvres on the part of the Israeli press serves the cause of comprehensive peace that we all seek.

Dr. Muinther J. Haddadin,
Amman.

Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia swap diplomatic signals

ADDIS ABABA (Agencies)

Egypt and Sudan engaged in a flurry of diplomacy on Monday over a failed assassination attempt against Egyptian leader Hosni Mubarak.

Egyptian Foreign Minister

Amr Musa met Ethiopian

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi

in Addis Ababa and officials

said talks concerned investi-

gations into who was behind

the plot to kill Mr. Mubarak.

Mr. Mubarak said on Sun-

day his country was preparing

to take unspecified measures

against Sudan over the

attempt to kill him.

"Foreign Minister Amr

Musa will hold a meeting

with the Ethiopian president,

and on the basis of the in-

formation we will have from

Ethiopia, we are going to

take some measures (against

Sudan)," Mr. Mubarak said.

Mr. Meles, Ethiopia's for-

mer president, was elected

prime minister of a federated

state last month.

For its part, Sudan says it

wants talks with Ethiopia

over allegations that it gave

sanctuary to three Egyptian

fugitives said to have been

involved in the attack on Mr.

Mubarak's motorcade.

Sudanese President Omar

Hassan Al Bashir said he

would send a delegation to

Addis Ababa to discuss the

allegations — which Sudan

was denied.

In remarks broadcast on

television late on Sunday,

Lieutenant-General Bashir

said he regretted Ethiopian

measures taken against his

country, including closing a

Sudanese consulate and cut-

ping its diplomatic presence in

Khartoum.

Gen. Bashir said he regret-

ted the moves and promised

to send a delegation to

Ethiopia to present the re-

sults of the search. Egypt's

foreign minister warned the

Sudanese to act quickly.

"Any attempt to win time

will be refused because it is a

dangerous issue," Mr. Musa

said after returning from

Ethiopia on Monday. "There

is no joke in an attack on a

president and we will not

accept any sort of hedging."

Ethiopia identified one of

the Egyptian gunman as Hus-

sein Ahmad Shahit-Ali, also

a teacher at the Awolia Islamic

School and a member of the

World Islamic League.

He apparently carried forged

Sudanese and Ethiopian

passports.

Jordan seeks to host MENAFIO

(Continued from page 1)

there are already local, re-

gional and international

agencies, including the

World Bank and its

affiliates, to finance projects

and the proposed bank would

not serve any particular

aid.

The four "core" parties

in the Middle East peace pro-

cess — Israel, Jordan, Egypt

and the Palestinians — plus

the U.S., Japan and several

other countries supported the

idea of MENAFIO being the

predetermined forerunner of

the bank.

But the Europeans

wanted MENAFIO to be

instituted as an experimental

body whose track record dur-

ing the first two years should

decide whether it could be

turned into a development

bank.

The issue is expected to

be decided during the next

two meetings of the task

force, in Rome in mid-

September and in

Washington in October.

diplomatic sources said.

The Jordanian desire to

host MENAFIO appears to

reflect the fact that the body

would be central to identifying

projects for financing,

including bilateral and multi-

lateral grants and technical

aid.

"We insist that the pro-

ject identification process is

done in Jordan," said the of-

ficial. "Other aspects of the

projects, including assess-

ment etc. could be done else-

where."

Meanwhile, Jordanian

officials maintained in public

that there had been no final

decision that the pro-

posed bank would be based

in Cairo.

Addressing a prepara-

tory meeting on the Middle

East and North Africa

(MENA) economic summit to

be held in Amman in

October, Minister of

Industry and Trade Ali Abul

Ragheb said he had no

official confirmation of the

MENA summit.

"As far as we know, no

official decision has been

taken over this issue," said

the minister, adding that estab-

lishment of the bank would

not serve any particular

aid.

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Saudi coffers saddled with growing public services

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Saudi Arabia plans to carry out sweeping reforms and cut subsidies to restore balance to its budget but it faces an increasing bill of services to its fast-growing population, experts said Monday.

Although the world's leading oil producer and exporter has decided to hike fees on telephone, electricity and aviation, its commitment to providing free education, health and water to its people will unlikely be affected.

"Services to citizens constitute a major burden on the budget but I don't think they will be affected by spending cuts," said Henry Azzam, chief economist at the Saudi National Commercial Bank.

Allocations for health, education, water, communication and social services stood at around 55 billion Saudi riyals (\$14.6 billion) in 1995, accounting for more than one third of the \$40 billion budget. Another 10 billion riyals (\$2.66 billion) were earmarked for social aid.

The figure is far higher than a decade ago as the population was around two thirds of the current population of nearly 18 million.

Experts said the value of services would steadily rise in the coming years as the Saudi population is growing by between three and four per cent annually because the government is encouraging natives to have more children.

They expected the govern-

ment to rationalise such services by making them more efficient but they ruled out any major cuts in such allocations.

They referred to the sixth development plan, which would focus on upgrading services to the citizens apart from development of the non-oil sector.

The 1995-1999 plan stated that one of the government's strategic goals would be to develop the Saudi society, provide it with social and health and allow it to effectively contribute to development programmes, the experts said.

"The state coffers could receive less funds in the future due to the drop in oil prices at a time when financing social services for the citizens depends mainly on the oil income, which accounts for more than two thirds of the total revenues," said Ihsan Abu Huleika, an expert at the Doha-based Gulf Organisation for Industrial Consulting (GOIC).

"The question is: How can we maintain the level and quality of such services? The answer could be through increasing non-oil earnings, encouraging the private sector to play a greater role, upgrading the efficiency of social programmes and encouraging the cooperative societies and other commercial and charity organisations to set up economic and social projects," he pointed out. Apart from services, Saudi

Arabia is also burdened by high spending on weapons as part of plans to bolster its army following the Gulf war.

Such commitments have combined with a decline in oil prices to create a large deficit in its budget, peaking at around \$33.6 billion in 1991 before easing to nearly \$10.6 billion in 1994. The shortfall was slashed to around \$4 billion in 1995 after the kingdom trimmed expenditure.

The sixth development plan, details of which were released two months ago, forecast spending of an average \$40 billion a year, one of lowest expenditure levels in Saudi history.

But the plan includes other unique features as it focuses on privatisation, attracting investment, and increasing non-oil revenues.

Privatisation plans, announced by King Fahd last year, cover airport services and the national airlines, water and electricity and other sectors. These would be coupled with cutting subsidies, another major burden on the Saudi budget. But the government has ruled out imposing income taxes after such a move triggered mass resignations eight years ago.

"Contribution by the private sector to social services has become necessary. The government should now determine the extent of such a contribution to ensure such services remain intact," Mr. Abu Huleika said.

Apart from services, Saudi

Businessmen urge APEC to speed up world trade rules

NEWPORT BEACH, California (R) — Business leaders from the United States, Japan and 16 other Pacific Rim nations urged APEC leaders to speed up and expand the liberalisation of world trade rules established last year under the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

In a report that will be forwarded to leaders of the 18-Nation Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, the business executives said hastening implementation of the GATT Uruguay Round commitments is a key component aimed at creating the world's largest free-trade bloc by the year 2000.

Their proposals are to be presented as a starting point for high level talks set for November in Osaka, Japan.

Leading executives of large and small companies from the member countries reached agreement on the recommendations Saturday as they wrapped up their third and final meeting this year in advance of the APEC summit.

The meeting of APEC's Pacific Business Forum opened Friday in this beach resort outside Los Angeles.

The report also urges

APEC governments to:

— Simplify procedures for obtaining business residency visas by 1996 and to introduce visa-free business travel throughout the APEC region by 1999.

— Ease and harmonise custom clearance procedures by 2000.

— Harmonise national product standards by 1999.

— Increase cooperation in safeguarding intellectual property rights by 2000.

— Establish a private-government task force to identify infrastructure needs in the region and develop investment guidelines by 1996.

In addition to a specific set of time limits urged for each measure recommended in the report, the business leaders called for a review system with "markers" to measure success in carrying out their plan.

THE BETTER HALF

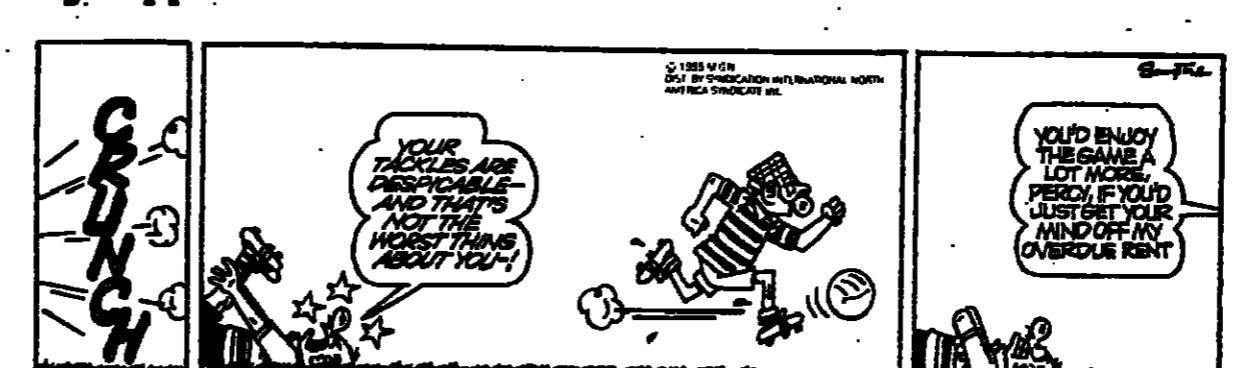


"What does a woman have to do to get some attention around here?!"

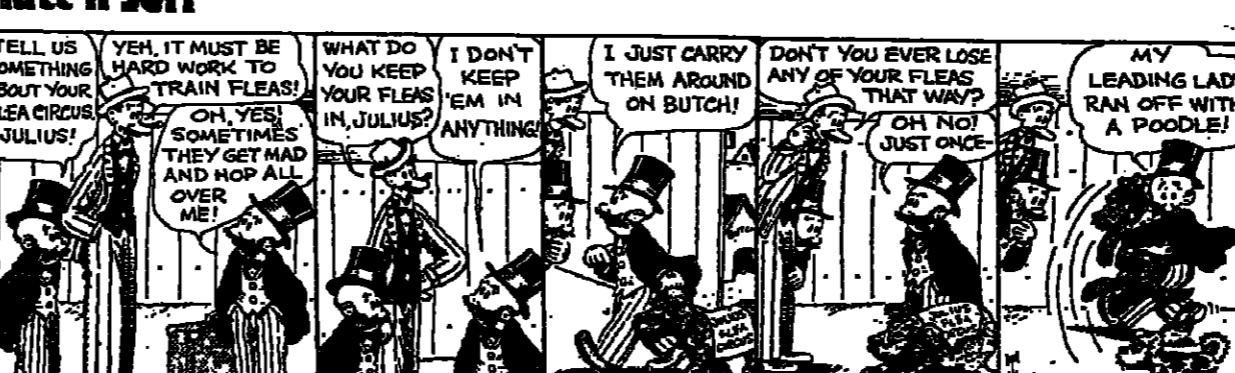
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt 'n' Jeff



Zedillo offers Mexicans gradual recovery

MEXICO CITY (R) — President Zedillo has pleased investors with a promise of prudent and gradual recovery in his first state of the nation speech, but he offered little to cheer the heart of the average Mexican struggling to cope with a crippling economic slowdown.

Mr. Zedillo's pledge to reduce the powers of his office in the name of greater democracy also won praise, but political analysts said the light at the end of the tunnel the president tried to offer his countrymen still looked a long way off.

"In the macro (economy), which is what matters to the big investors, there will be no fundamental change... he gave no sign that that will change," said historian and political commentator Lorenzo Meyer.

But he added: "The common Mexican, the family, the

worker, was promised that the recovery may begin, but under the same old rules, which have not been very positive for them."

Conscious of Mexico's dire economic plight following a bungled devaluation last December, Mr. Zedillo made the speech a sober, austere occasion stripped of the pomp and open-air motorcades of previous years.

There were no reports of street disturbances, and even the leftist Democratic Revolution Party was muted in its protests in congress, where members only held up placards as Mr. Zedillo spoke, parodying his campaign slogans.

"Unemployment, rising prices, hunger, violence: Is that well-being for all the family?" one placard asked.

Mr. Zedillo predicted that the economy, which has shed more than a million jobs

since the December peso crash and shrunk by a staggering 10.5 per cent in the second quarter of this year, would start to grow again soon.

"We have surmounted the worst of the crisis and the coming years will be times of economic growth and increasing jobs," he said. The government would seek to kick-start that recovery through carefully stepped-up public spending, he added.

Mr. Zedillo's remarks "represent a major turning point in fiscal policy," said respected Mexican economist Rogelio Ramirez De Lao, adding that a relaxation in financial discipline to boost growth was not necessarily a bad thing.

"It was noticeable — the absence of any mention of a public sector surplus," he added.

Mr. Zedillo, whose

approval rating has slumped to just 34 per cent in recent polls, also promised to create a powerful, independent national auditor's office.

"That is something totally new, it is a step in the dismantling of the authoritarian presidency and achieving more balance between the powers," Mr. Meyer said.

Mr. Zedillo said he would bring in laws to fight organised crime and drug trafficking and to establish a national public safety system to train and professionalise Mexico's corrupt police.

Harmonise national product standards by 1999.

— Increase cooperation in safeguarding intellectual property rights by 2000.

— Establish a private-government task force to identify infrastructure needs in the region and develop investment guidelines by 1996.

In addition to a specific set of time limits urged for each measure recommended in the report, the business leaders called for a review system with "markers" to measure success in carrying out their plan.

U.S. government changing how it measures growth, productivity

WASHINGTON (AP) — As if Americans didn't have enough to worry about with stagnant wages and uncertain job prospects, now the government is preparing a revision of economic history that will show the current recovery was even weaker than previously thought.

Sandra Kristoff, the U.S. ambassador to APEC, said in August that the United States could not offer to accelerate measures under the GATT Uruguay Round, as it already has met its commitments and the Clinton administration has limited statutory authority to go further.

The business leaders acknowledged they did not consider "political" obstacles.

"We just laid out what we thought should happen," said Les McCraw, the chairman and chief executive officer of Fluor Corp. and the U.S. co-chairman of the meeting.

After their last summit in Bogor, Indonesia, last November, APEC leaders pledged to achieve free trade and investment in the region by 2020. The Pacific Business Forum was charged with devising a plan for the APEC leaders to consider when they meet again in Osaka in November.

The report also urges

APEC governments to:

— Simplify procedures for obtaining business residency visas by 1996 and to introduce visa-free business travel throughout the APEC region by 1999.

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amount of money going into their pockets.

"We haven't changed reality. All we have changed is the numbers we put down on paper," said David Wyss, economist at Dri-McGraw Hill Inc. "The economy didn't change just because we are counting it differently."

So far in this recovery, which began in March 1991, the economy has been expanding at a puny annual rate of 2.6 per cent, instead of the 3.1 per cent average previously believed. Under either figure, this is shaping up to be the weakest upturn in the post-World War II period.

By contrast, the revised GDP measurement makes the period before 1987 look more robust, boosting average growth by about one-half percentage point.

While the average American may not pay attention to year-to-year changes in the GDP, these revisions will have a profound impact on other measurements that do strike closer to home. One of these is productivity.

For U.S. living standards to increase, it takes steady gains in productivity, the amount of production obtained per hour of work.

But with less output, according to the GDP measurement, productivity will look weaker as well.

Under the old figures, productivity appeared to be rising by two per cent a year in this recovery, compared to one per cent annually since 1973. But the revisions will show productivity rising by 1.3 per cent a year in the 1970s and 1980s, compared to 1.4 per cent in this upturn, a negligible difference.

By wiping out the previous pickup in productivity, the measurement dashes one of the hopes of the Clinton administration — that the

economy was finally breaking out of the stagnant productivity period from 1973 to 1990.

"Tiny increases in productivity are the reason wage gains have been depressed since 1973 and Americans' standard of living looks so anemic when compared to the boom years of the 1950s and 1960s."

One might wonder why the Clinton administration, already facing a tough reelection campaign, would produce a statistical revision that is going to weaken its boasting rights about the economy.

Commerce Department economists say they are simply trying to correct a long-standing problem with the GDP measurement.

Lewis Alexander, the department's chief economist and a Clinton appointee, said he has gotten nothing but support from others in the administration.

"This is the right thing to do. The new numbers are clearly better," he said.

The problem being addressed is the use of a base year, currently 1987, to establish fixed values for the various components of output in computing the inflation-adjusted GDP figures.

That system works reasonably well as long as the prices of all goods are generally rising at the same rate.

But it was thrown out of sync, first in the 1970s because of the huge run-up in energy prices, and more recently with the sharp drop in computer prices. Commerce analysts estimate that computers account for 60 per cent of the overstatement of GDP in the current recovery.

To fix the problem, Commerce is jettisoning the fixed base year and switching to a rolling average, called it a "chain-weighted" measurement.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Be alert to danger in the business world this morning, and then a fine opportunity may present itself from far away.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) A successful business person of your acquaintance can give fine advice for getting ahead, so follow it.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Don't light into a good friend today about some promise made, and later tonight you can discuss your ambitions with others.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Don't mix into an altercation between a family tie and an outsider, and then you can carry through with inspired ideas.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Don't run away from your task because you get a flash idea which is not good, and later today you can enjoy good friends.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) If you don't commit yourself early today to some new interest, you can easily get some family matter properly handled.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) An associate gives you a new idea which is not very good, so forget it and later get routines improved with other partners.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Don't waste time talking to a stranger and then you can find some new and profitable kind of income.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Don't be extravagant where luxury is concerned today, and find more modern ways of increasing income.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Postpone handling that vexing matter at home and plan the future more wisely so you can be more successful.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Don't permit some outside affair to get you away from your tasks. Be with persons who can assist you to make personal progress.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Don't waste time gossiping this morning, and then tonight you can handle outside affairs with intelligence.

Birthstone of September: Sapphire — Lapis Lazuli

Real Madrid start season with a bang

MADRID (R) — Spanish champions Real Madrid started the new season in splendid style on Sunday with a 3-1 romp away to newly promoted Rayo Vallecano, the capital's third club.

Real, 1-0 up at the interval after a 29th-minute goal by Jose Amavisca, cut loose after the break with World Cup midfielder Fernando Hierro scoring twice between goals from Sandro Sierra and Quique Flores.

Brazilian Guilherme netted Rayo's consolation goal when Real were already 4-0 up.

Real made light of the absence of injured Chilean Ivan Zamorano, league top scorer last season, and Danish playmakers Michael Laudrup, needed for Wednesday's European Championship qualifier against Belgium.

There were few surprises on the opening weekend of the season with all the championship favourites winning.

Barcelona won 2-0 at Villadolid but Johan Cruyff's expensively rebuilt side were fortunate not to go behind in the first half.

After the interval well-taken goals by former Tottenham defender Gica Popescu and promising Ivan de la Pena sealed the three points.

Another rebuilt team delighted with their start were Atletico Madrid, who conceded the first goal against Real Sociedad but bounced



Real Madrid's Luis Enrique (foreground) and ball during their Sept. 3 match. Real Madrid Quintana of Rayo Vallecano struggle for the won 5-1 (AFP photo)

back to win their home clash 4-1.

Russian Valery Karpin put Sociedad in front midway through the first half but a crashing free-kick from Serbian Milinko Pantic made it 1-1 at halftime.

Two goals — one a penalty — by Bulgaria's Lyuboslav Penev and a last strike by Argentine midfielder Diego Simeone 15 minutes from the end completed an excellent Atletico victory.

Athletic Bilbao were equally impressive in a 4-0 home eclipse of racing San

tander.

Espanol had to work a little harder for their 3-1 home victory over newly promoted Salamanca, while Cup Winners' Cup holders Real Zaragoza managed only a 1-0 win at home to Oviedo.

Merida, beginning their first-ever season in the top flight, were disappointed not to notch a home win.

They took an early lead against UEFA Cup representatives Real Betis, were pegged back just before the break and had a clear penalty turned down in injury time.

The traumatic summers suffered by Sevilla and Celta, relegated for financial problems, then grudgingly reinstated, seem to have taken a heavy toll.

Both teams lost at home to a solitary goal, against Tenerife and Compostela respectively.

Deportivo Coruna, managed by former Welsh international John Toshack, kicked off the season in fine form on Saturday, easily beating Valencia 3-0 in a repeat of last season's cup final.

Morceli looks to reward Rieti with a record

ROME (R) — Algeria's Noureddine Morceli leads a host of world champions on Tuesday on what could well be a record breaking farewell to the central Italian town of Rieti's annual athletics meeting, now beset by a drop in sponsors.

Morceli, the world 1,500 metres champion and local favourite, wants to mark the 25th edition of the Rieti event by breaking the 3,000-metres world best of seven minutes 25.11 seconds he set in Monte Carlo last year.

The Algerian, an honorary citizen of Rieti after setting the 1,500 metres and mile world records at meetings in 1992 and 1993, is not alone in chasing records in what could be the town's final major meeting for some time.

Ireland's 5,000 metres world champion Sonia O'Sullivan has announced she intends to try and break the women's mile record set by Romanian Paula Ivan in Nice in 1989.

It would not be the first

time the small-town track, with a backdrop of Italy's Abruzzi Mountains, had witnessed such a feat. In 1982 Romania's Marica Puica broke American Mary Decker's mile world record.

Kenya's Moses Kiptanui, the 3,000 metres steeplechase world champion and record holder, has said he wants to try and break the two mile best but the attempt looks doubtful after an exhausting 5,000 metres in Berlin on Friday.

Organisers say Britain's triple jump world record holder Jonathan Edwards has promised to be at the meeting, along with pole vault world champion Sergei Bubka of the Ukraine.

Double world champion Michael Johnson of the United States has arrived in town and will run the 200 metres while organisers say Britain's 100 metres Olympic champion Linford Christie is "90 per cent" certain to appear.

"But Frank's won the title and now he should take a little time to enjoy it. For the next six to nine months he can enjoy his family and content himself because naturally he's going to make millions when he does fight."

"Tyson will be the No. 1 contender, but there's Bruce Seldon (WBA titlist) and Axel Schulz and South Africa's Frans Botha who fight in Germany for the vacant IBF title," King said.

"We have got so many guys out there to make a match with," Bruno, it seems, can't wait to get at Tyson, even though he's on friendly terms with the former undisputed champion.

"I respect him and I love him because he's good for boxing. But my main dream of all is to fight Mike Tyson in a rematch," he said.

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Sports

Fukuoka spent \$3b on Student Games

FUKUOKA (AFP) — Fukuoka's mayor justified spending three billion dollars on the biggest-ever World Student Games by saying Monday the event could be seen as an opening gambit to host a future Olympic Games.

Keiichi Kuwahara, speaking a day after the 12-day Student Games closed, indicated the city may — despite worries about high-budget capital projects — one day bid to stage the Olympics.

The 72-year-old mayor added: "I don't know if I'd be still alive then... but I take the reputed success of this Universiade as the first step." The three billion dollars spent on the Universiade went into building six new sports facilities as well as roads which city officials say will spur the urban redevelopment of this 1,000-year-old port city.

But some citizens groups have warned that excessive investment in construction — at the expense of welfare and education — would cause the city's finances, which depend on bond issues for 16 per cent of its budget, to collapse.

Having secured only limited sponsorship money at a time of slow economic recovery, the city also spent 170 million dollars on running the biennial event, which attracted a record 5,740 athletes and officials from 162 countries.

An average 65 per cent of the 150,000 seats at venues for the 12-sport games were filled daily, "exceeding our expectations," games ticketing official Shigeru Imafuku said.

Fukuoka, which will stage the 1997 Pan-Pacific swimming championships, has already bid for the 2001 East Asian Games for which the Japanese City of Osaka is also a candidate.

"The Universiade was a fantastic publicity for Fukuoka," said sports supremo Primo Nebinto, who heads the Student Games governing body and the powerful International Amateur Athletic Association.

The next games will be held at the Italian island of Sicily in 1997 and the Spanish resort of Majorca in 1999.

Sanchez Vicario ousted in U.S. Open stunner

NEW YORK (AFP) — The chances of a U.S. Open final showdown between co-number ones Steffi Graf and Monica Seles improved tremendously here Sunday with the ouster of 1994 women's champion Arantxa Sanchez Vicario.

The third-seeded Spaniard made the earliest exit by a defending Open women's champion since 1986, losing to 14th seed Mary Joe Fernandez 1-6, 6-4, 6-4.

The biggest stunner so far at the \$9.86 million tournament denied Sanchez Vicario her seventh consecutive quarter-final berth and sent Fernandez into a match with ninth seed Gabriela Sabatini.

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much as I can against players like Arantxa."

Reigning Wimbledon champions Pete Sampras and Graf advanced in much different fashion earlier.

Big-serving Australian Mark Philippoussis, an 18-year-old ranked 93rd in the world, gave world number two Sampras a scare before falling 6-7 (5-7), 7-5, 7-5, 6-3.

The two-hour, 50-minute

triumph by Sampras sends him

into a round of 16 matchup

with friend and 15th seed

fellow American Todd Mar-

tin.

Sampras served 27 aces to

15 for Philippoussis, who had

nine double faults to 14 by

Sampras. The American had

69 winners and 33 unforced

errors to 59 winners and 40

errors for Philippoussis.

"His serve was so big I had

a hard time reading it," Sam-

pras said. "I was kind of

confused out there. I looked

like an idiot. He's very

dangerous. I played well

when I had to. I will have

to play a little better as the

tournament goes along."

Martin, a 1994 semi-finalist

here, reached the round of 16

by beating Colombia's

Mauricio Hadad 6-2, 6-1, 6-3.

Unheralded two-third vol-

leyers Byron Black of Zim-

babwe and Michael Tebbutt of Australia advanced to the

round of 16. Tebbutt faces

fifth seed Michael Chang, who beat Australia's Todd Woodbridge 6-3, 6-2, 6-1, while Black meets eighth seed Stich, who bumped Australia's Scott Draper 6-3, 6-1, 6-0, 6-3.

Third seed Thomas Muster and 14th seed Jim Courier, a former world number one, also advanced with victories.

Graf reached the quarter-

finals here for the 11th consecutive year, dispatching 16th-ranked Chanda Rubin 6-2, 6-2, in 54 minutes. Graf broke Rubin in the fifth and seventh games of each set, taking advantage of the American's 31 unforced

errors to 27 for Rubin.

Graf, a three-time winner

here and 17-time Grand Slam singles champion, has won six titles and compiled a 36-1 record this year. She has a

18-7 record here in the quarter-finals and beyond, having won the title in 1988, 1989 and 1993.

Graf's only loss this year came in her only match be-

tween the Open and Wimble-

don, when she was beaten by

Coetzer in the Canadian

Open first round.

Sabatini, who reached the

quarter-finals here for a ninth

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14-year-old Swiss rookie

Martina Hingis 6-2, 6-4.

Sabatini, who won the indoor

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TEST SITE: A partial view of the Mururoa atoll, where the last series of French nuclear tests are scheduled to take place between Sept. 1 1995 and May 1996. The Greenpeace organisation and other anti-nuclear activists are campaigning to dissuade France from conducting the tests (AFP photo)

New bomb scare spreads fear in France

PARIS (Agencies) — Police defused a powerful gas canister bomb outside a Paris metro station on Monday that sent new fears through a French nation already jittery from a wave of blasts and attempts.

The 25-kilogramme device, dismantled after a cleaner found it in a public toilet, was the fifth bomb planted in France in 40 days by suspected Algerian extremists. Three of them exploded, killing a total of seven people and wounding 101.

The latest bomb, concealed on a busy square near the Convention underground train station in the 15th arrondissement (district), was planted just 50 metres from a school on the day that hundreds of thousands of schoolchildren returned to class amid tight security after the summer holidays.

"An explosive device made up of a gas canister full of an explosive which has not yet been identified and a detonator has been neutralised," Paris police prefect (chief) Philippe Massoni told reporters at the scene.

The discovery was made barely 24 hours after a pressure-cooker bomb misfired in a crowded open-air Paris market, wounding four people. A massacre was avoided only because most of the explosives failed to ignite.

Monday's attempted bombing coincided with the opening of a trial in Brussels of 13 suspected members of Algeria's most militant fundamentalist group, the Islamic Armed Group (GIA), which police believe is behind the wave of attacks in France.

Paris put schools on high alert as the end of holidays sparked fears that children might be the next target of bombers who have shown they are bent on causing death at random.

Sunday's explosion was the third in the French capital in less than six weeks. The blasts have killed a total of seven and wounded more than 100. Two earlier devices were also contained in gas canisters.

A fourth gas canister bomb, planted on the track used by France's high-speed trains near Lyon, central

France, on Aug. 26, failed to go off.

French authorities believe bombing campaign is the work of the GIA, which is fighting to overthrow the country's military-backed regime.

The GIA, known to have planted gas canister bombs in Algeria, has accused the French government of backing the Algiers regime.

A dozen alleged GIA members went on trial in Brussels amid tight security.

The accused include Ahmad Zaoui, 35, an Algerian suspected of being a leading figure in the GIA, one of the most radical of the guerrilla groups to topple Algeria's military-backed regime.

The trial is being closely watched in France in the hope it will cast light on the activities of the GIA's European network.

Abdul Karim Deneche, the reported leader of the GIA in Europe, is currently in custody in Sweden and French authorities have requested his extradition in connection with the July 25 blast at the

Saint Michel underground station.

French police have also been pursuing a possible Belgian connection to the attacks.

Brussels police said Monday they had carried out raids on five addresses in the capital Sunday after a tip-off from French authorities.

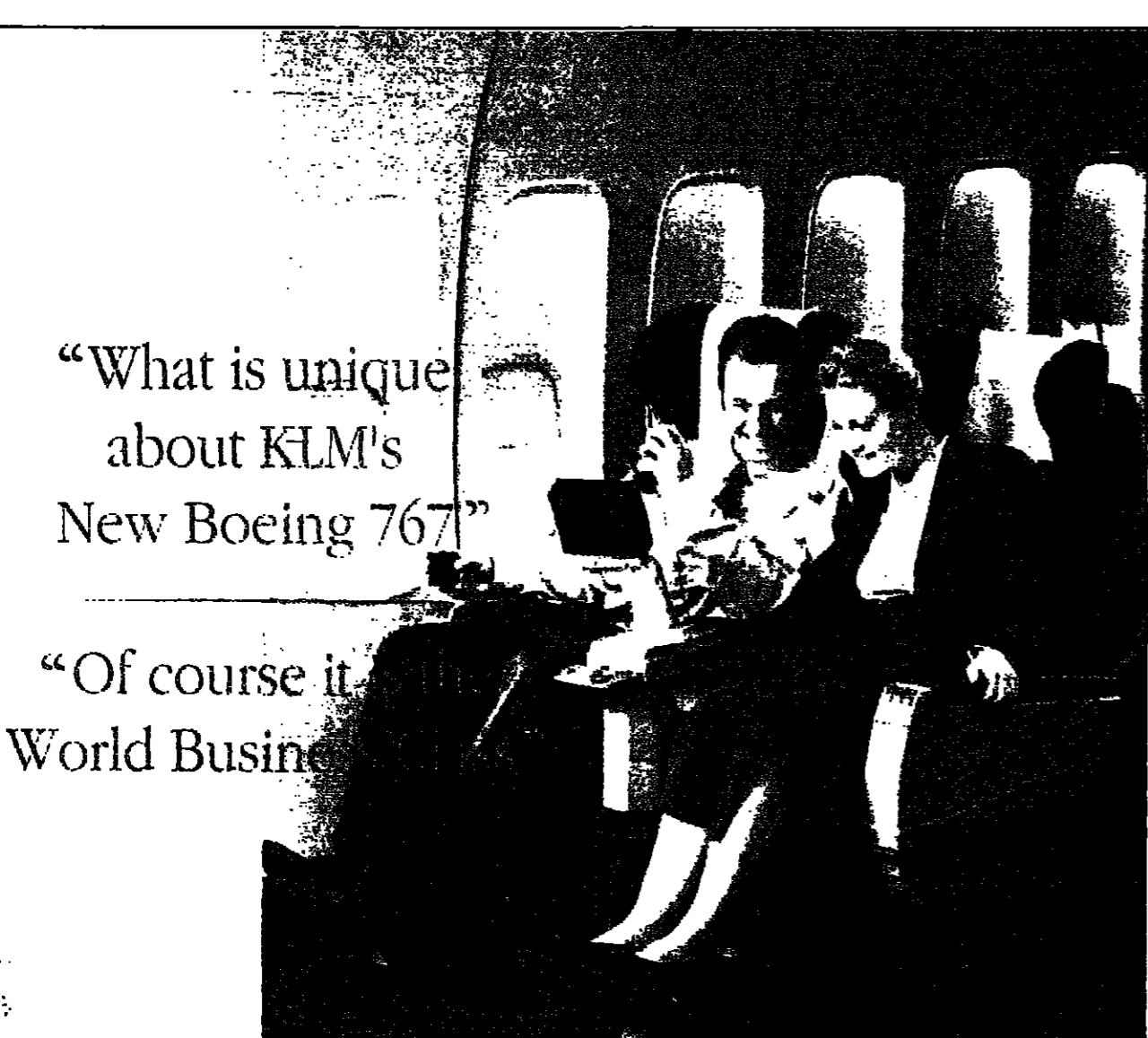
However, the raids failed to produce any evidence of arms running by the targeted Islamic activists.

Belgian police sources have also stressed there is no evidence to link those on trial in Belgium with the Paris bombings.

Zaoui was one of 13 men arrested in March in two police swoops aimed at dismantling GIA operations in Belgium.

One of them, Yousef Al Majda, has since been expelled to his native Morocco.

The others — seven Algerians, two Moroccans, one Libyan and two Belgians of north African origin — are charged with various offences including belonging to a criminal organisation, fraud and weapons violations.



As of August 30th, 1995, we are not

only flying you a brand new

aircraft but also you will be able

to experience

our "World

Business Class"

from / to

Amman. Here

you can stretch

out on a seat

which provides

you with 50 percent much more recline and leg space in addition to the personal video screen and telephone. So in your next trip, bridge the gap in comfort and fly new B-767.

The Reliable Airline



Hamas urges PLO to launch dialogue

GAZA (R) — The militant movement Hamas called on Monday for a "comprehensive, serious" dialogue with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in what it said was an effort to close Palestinian ranks.

Hamas also demanded the release of its activists from PNA prisons as a goodwill gesture.

"We in the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas see... that we must immediately start in a comprehensive, serious national dialogue that will be binding to all influential groups in the Palestinian arena including the authority (PNA) and the opposition," Hamas said in statement.

Hamas said the aim of the dialogue was "to reach an understanding that will organise the nature of the Palestinian national work at this critical stage of our people's history."

The Hamas movement is the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) bitter rival. Vowing to wreck the 1993 Palestinian self-rule peace deal with Israel, Hamas has carried out a series of suicide bombings that have killed scores of Israelis.

One Hamas official called for an agreement with the PNA before its authority extends to the West Bank for fear of further erosion of Hamas support.

PLO officials said that since PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's return to Gaza from exile last year, he has tried to contain Hamas through dialogue. The sides exchanged draft agreements but none was signed.

Palestinian police have cracked down on Hamas following the suicide attacks. Many Hamas military and political leaders have been arrested and some tried in a military court and sentenced to long jail terms.

Israel and PLO hope to clinch an agreement for expanding self-rule this month.

Hamas blamed the PNA for the absence of dialogue because it chose "the option of repression and confrontation with Hamas movement pushed by American and Israeli direct and open pressures."

"If the authority is concerned with having a dialogue, it is called upon to show national goodwill gestures and release all political detainees and to halt the repression campaign against Hamas movement," the statement said.

Hamas warned Israel and its prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, to refrain from "deepening the split among Palestinians by using some of its tools in the Palestinian Authority," and said that their "surprises" would be "larger than all the Israeli security precautions."

On Sunday, Israeli and PLO sources said Israel had also two top Hamas men to meet their jailed leader, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, hoping to foster an accord between the movement and the Palestinian self-rule authority.

Hisham Abdul Razak, a senior PLO official who negotiates with Hamas, said the sides had already drafted such an understanding in June. But it was put off after a Tel Aviv bus bombing in July, after a hiatus of several months, and Mr. Arafat's subsequent arrests of Hamas activists.

Scores of Israelis have been killed in attacks by Hamas and the smaller, more militant Islamic Jihad group over the past year. But there are now indications of a rift between Hamas' local leaders and those operating from Amman, Damascus and other areas.

Khaled Amayreh, a Hebrew University journalism professor and Hamas expert, said Hamas activists in the West Bank and Gaza are more interested in winning a

share of power than those outside, who are still determined to scuttle the Israeli-PLO peacemaking.

"It (the autonomy agreement) is a fact on the ground," Mr. Amayreh said.

The Hamas statement Monday contained none of the customary threats against Israel, but stressed it was not a manifestation of weakness. "Our call for a serious and comprehensive dialogue is made at the time when our militants' swords are still covered with Zionists' blood," it said.

Hamas spokesman in Damascus has claimed the most recent bus bombing, which killed five people in Jerusalem on Aug. 21. But there was no local claim of credit, as in earlier attacks.

Sheikh Yassin last month wrote Mr. Arafat affirming the group's "commitment to reaching an agreement with the Palestinian Authority."

Mr. Abdul Razak said he and two Hamas activists, Ismail Hanjeh and Khaled Al Hindi, visited Sheikh Yassin in prison recently. Mr. Abdul Razak said Sheikh Yassin called on his followers to end the violence.

Mr. Hindi, a member of the Hamas committee negotiating with Mr. Arafat, refused to comment. "We will issue a statement the moment we have something to say," he told the Associated Press.

Hamas sources have said the movement is considering forming a political party to participate in Palestinian elections in the West Bank and Gaza expected by the end of the year.

On Sunday, a Hamas spokesman in Jordan said the group would form a political party, but stressed its goal would be opposing Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Ibrahim Ghosheh, the spokesman, said Hamas' party will not participate in the elections and will oppose all accords between Israel and the PLO.

Israeli 'party' for Jerusalem gets off

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel on Monday kicked off the 3,000th anniversary celebrations of what is seen as King David's conquest of Jerusalem, underlined by criticism that it was an attempt to deny Palestinian claims to the city.

The 17-month festivities are being boycotted by the European Union and Palestinian leaders because of the controversy. Some orthodox Jewish leaders are also staying away, saying the celebrations are too secular and that the date being celebrated for the founding of the "Jewish capital" is wrong.

For Monday's opening ceremony, Israeli leaders came to the Arab neighbourhood of Silwan where archaeologists have been uncovering the "city of David," the ruins of the ancient settlement where Israelis believe King David proclaimed the capital of the Jewish kingdom.

Dozens of riot police lined the rooftops to prevent possible unrest as Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and 200 guests

kicked off the celebrations on the slopes below the walled Old City.

Mr. Rabin emphasised the central role of Jerusalem in Jewish history. "My Jerusalem is the heart of the Jewish people, the focus of its yearnings, the land of its visions, the cradle of its prayers," Mr. Rabin said.

As the half-hour ceremony ended, Silwan residents staged a silent protest, releasing dozens of balloons in the Palestinian national colours of green, red, black and white. A large Palestinian flag was hoisted, attached to three balloons.

Silwan resident Moen Shami, a 28-year-old plumber, said some streets of his neighbourhood had been quickly paved and piles of garbage picked up ahead of the ceremony, a sharp contrast to what he said where years of neglect by the municipality.

"They can change the physical appearance, but they cannot change our hearts," Mr. Shami said. "They say it is a Jewish town, it is not."

2 nuns, 2 journalists shot dead in Algeria

ALGIERS (AP) — A journalist working for Algerian state radio was shot to death Monday, the third reporter killed in two days in a resurgence of violence that includes car bombings and attacks on symbolic targets, the radio said.

Yasmina Briki, who worked for Radio-Culture, was killed in front of her home in Eucalyptus, one of several Algiers suburbs considered a stronghold of Muslim fundamentalists. The group of towns where Islamic extremists are known to operate make up what is often referred to as the "triangle of fear."

During the conference, participants will divide into small-group sessions to discuss issues as the outstanding Jordan-Israel bilateral agenda, ways to expand economic opportunities of peace as well as the role Washington can play in the next stage of the peace process.

The extremists, seeking to establish an Islamic state, are opposed to presidential elections set for Nov. 16, along with Algeria's main opposition parties.

Cartoonist Brahim Garoui, 40, who sketched for the daily Al Moudjahid, was found dead Monday after armed men took him from his home Saturday in Eucalyptus, a spokesman for the newspaper said on anonymity.

Garoui became the 50th journalist to be killed in the insurgency, which began when the government canceled elections the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was expected to win. More than 30,000 people have died.

Said Tarzout, a 32-year-old reporter for the French-language newspaper Le Matin, was gunned down Sunday near his home in Tizi Ouzou, the capital of the Kabyle region, officials sources said.

Tarzout was the third member of the Le Matin staff killed.

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Antonioni makes

return in Venice

VENICE, Italy (AP) — Silenced by a stroke, famed director Michelangelo Antonioni still had much to add Sunday to the Venice Film Festival with his comeback film Beyond The Clouds.

Extra showings of the film were added because of huge demand for seats. Some people began lining up for tickets hours in advance. It received a standing ovation at each showing. Wim Wenders co-directed with the 83-year-old Antonioni, who lost his voice in a stroke 10 years ago and was awarded an Oscar this year for his lifetime career. The film includes two interludes with music by Irish rock group U2. Taken from short stories in 1983, the film features an international cast including John Malkovich, Fanny Ardant, Vincent Perez, Paul Weller and Sophie Marceau.

How can a man who is unable to speak direct a film? To dispel doubts that Antonioni's only contribution to Beyond The Clouds was his name, the Italian director's wife shot an on-set documentary showing the film in the making.

Antonioni used gestures or notes to pass along his instructions. Like many of his earlier films, Beyond The Clouds deals with the difficulties of love. Antonioni's last film was Two Telegrams, which debuted in 1981. He also has directed Blow Up, L'Aventura and La Notte.

Vietnam outlaws casinos, almost

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — The Vietnamese government has outlawed all casinos, backing off from its earlier receptivity to foreign investment in a business once identified only with decadent capitalism.

The ban was approved by Le Xuan Trinh, chairman of the prime minister's office, the state-run Vietnam News reported Monday. The report gave no reason for Mr. Trinh's decision, which hints at some of the conflicting interests in this Communist nation as it seeks to integrate into the non-Communist World and modernise its economy. Vietnam has experienced a general tightening of internal security in the past few months.

Vietnamese conservatives are suspicious of casinos, even though supporters argue that they are a good way to attract foreign tourists and investors. Vietnam has only one world class gambling house, the Do Son Casino, built at a northern beach resort 140 kilometres east of Hanoi. The newspaper described the facility as "a trial run for casinos in Vietnam" and said it would not necessarily have to close under the new rule. The Do Son Casino is owned partly by Hong Kong's United International Business (UIB) Group. A company owned by Hong Kong tycoon Stanley Ho is one of UIB's partners.

Acclaimed play on U.S. Navy gays to fold

LONDON — Burning Blue, a critically acclaimed play about a homosexual witch-hunt in the U.S. Navy, is to close early, producer Robert Fox said. Within a week of its opening in London's West End in July, Fox clinched a Hollywood deal with stars such as Tom Cruise, Johnny Depp and Brad Pitt being considered for the main roles. But Fox, faced with losses of £363,000 (\$563,200), has been forced to close the play early, blaming a summer heatwave, the play's subject matter and scenes of male frontal nudity.